

Washington, DC- Thursday, Congressman Harry Teague announced that the Department of Education has awarded New Mexico Tech \$573,697 through the Promoting Postbaccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans (PPOHA) program. The funding will be put towards critical graduate program infrastructure improvements and expanded outreach efforts to Hispanic students to increase their representation in the graduate student body.

"Supporting New Mexico Tech's efforts to expand the number of Hispanic graduate students is incredibly important. As an institution of higher education, tech is committed to providing everyone who wants it, the opportunity to succeed, and this funding will help them accomplish that," said Congressman Harry Teague. "I applaud New Mexico Tech's efforts to reach out to these potential graduate students and hope to see similar projects develop at institutions across Southern New Mexico."

According to the U.S. Department of Education, enrollment of Hispanics in New Mexico Tech's graduate student body is far below their representation in the state population and also in the undergraduate student body. Using the resources provided in PPOHA program, the university hopes to see a 50% increase in Hispanic graduate students.

New Mexico Tech President Dr. Daniel H. Lopez said he is grateful for Congressman Teague's support in seeking passage of this award.

"I want to recognize the strong support that Congressman Harry Teague gives to New Mexico Tech," Dr. Lopez said. "Although the grant was awarded on its merits, we appreciate his constant support of the university. This grant will greatly increase the university's capability to support all our graduate students."

Dr. Ricardo Maestas, vice president of student and university relations, said New Mexico Tech will use the funds to upgrade technologies, redesign curricula and develop a Center for Graduate Studies.

"This really is amazing grant that will allow us to modernize our graduate programs," Dr. Maestas said. "Thanks to Congressman Teague's support, we'll be able to invest in new

technologies and develop a new vision for our graduate programs."

Physics Department Chairman Dr. Dave Westpfahl will be the program director. He said the grant will eventually help the university attract new graduate students, and create learning environments that help them succeed.

To address their goals for this program, the university will implement several strategies, including enhanced data tracking of students from undergraduate to graduate studies, develop classrooms that support both technologically-enriched face-to-face instruction and distance learning in all 14 graduate departments, and training for faculty and graduate fellows to take advantage of technologically-advanced classrooms.

The purpose of the PPOHA program is to expand graduate educational opportunities Hispanic students, expand the graduate class offerings and enhance the program quality in the institutions of higher education that are educating the majority of Hispanic college students and helping large numbers of Hispanic and low-income students complete postsecondary degrees.